Implementation of NEP in West Bengal | West Bengal | 07 Mar 2025

Why in News?

A **Supreme Court** lawyer petitioned the top court to direct the **Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and West Bengal** governments to implement **the National Education Policy (NEP).**

- The plea comes amid a **heated debate led by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin**, who has **accused the Centre of imposing Hindi on the State.**

Key Points

- **Argument for NEP Implementation:**
  - The plea urged Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and West Bengal to **sign a memorandum of understanding** with the Centre to implement **the NEP.**
  - It was argued that these States must act to **protect children's fundamental right to education.**
- **Clarification on Hindi in NEP:**
  - The **NEP mentions 'Hindi' only once and does not mandate its imposition.**
  - The policy does not compel State governments to teach Hindi to children.
- **Constitutional and Legal Considerations:**
  - The plea argued that both the Centre and the States have a stake in education, as it falls under **the Concurrent List of the Constitution.**
  - The **petition acknowledged that the Supreme Court cannot directly compel a State** to adopt a policy or sign an MoU.
    - However, **the court can intervene** if the matter affects fundamental rights.

National Education Policy 2020

- **About:**
  - The **National Education Policy 2020** seeks to tackle the evolving development needs of India.
    - It calls for a **comprehensive overhaul of the education system**, including its **regulations and management,** to establish a modern system that aligns with 21st-century educational goals, including **Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4)**, while respecting **India's cultural heritage and values.**
  - It replaces the thirty-four year old **National Policy on Education, 1986, modified in 1992** (NPE 1986/92).
- **Salient Features:**
  - **Universal Access:** NEP 2020 focuses on **universal access to school education**, including pre-school to secondary levels.
  - **Early Childhood Education:** The **10+2 structure will shift to a 5+3+3+4 system**, bringing 3-6-year-olds under school curriculum, with a focus on **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).**
  - **Multilingualism: Mother tongue or regional language will be the medium of instruction till Grade 5**, with options for Sanskrit and other languages.
    - Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized.
  - **Inclusive Education:** Special emphasis on **Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)**, support for children with disabilities, and **establishment of "Bal**

Bhavans."

- **Elimination of Barriers:** The policy promotes a seamless education system with **no rigid distinctions between arts and sciences**, curricular and extracurricular activities, and vocational and academic streams.
- **GER Enhancement:** Aim to increase **Gross Enrolment Ratio from 26.3% to 50% by 2035,** adding 3.5 crore new seats.
- **Research Focus:** Creation of **National Research Foundation** to boost research culture and capacity.
- **Language Preservation:** Support for Indian languages, including an **Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI)** and strengthening language departments.
- **Internationalization:** Facilitation of international collaborations and **entry of top-ranked foreign universities.**
- **Funding:** Joint efforts to increase **public investment in education to 6% of GDP.**
- **PARAKH Assessment Center:** The establishment of **PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)** as a national assessment center signifies a significant step towards competency-based and holistic assessment in education.
- **Gender Inclusion Fund:** The policy introduces a **Gender Inclusion Fund,** emphasizing the importance of gender equality in education and supporting initiatives to empower disadvantaged groups.
- **Special Education Zones: Special Education Zones** are envisioned to address the specific needs of disadvantaged regions and groups, furthering the policy's commitment to equitable access to quality education for all.